

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3853

ANSWERED ON:09.08.2016

Leopard Census

Singh Deo Shri Kalikesh Narayan

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

- (a) the number of leopards in the country as per the national leopard census along with the methodology used for conducting the same;
- (b) whether the census has helped evaluate the condition of leopard habitats across the country, if so, the details and findings thereof and if not, the reasons therefor;
- (c) whether the Government has undertaken measures to reduce the intensity of human-leopard conflicts, if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor;
- (d) whether instances of poaching of leopard have increased in the last three years and if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) the steps/measures taken by the Government to curb the same?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) FOR ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

(SHRI ANIL MADHAV DAVE)

(a) and (b) Ministry has not undertaken any national leopard census in the country. However, during the national level estimation of tiger population by Wildlife Institute of India, an effort was also made to estimate the leopard populations across the tiger range States using capture-recapture frame work using camera traps. In addition to the population estimates, this effort has helped to understand the condition of leopard habitat across the tiger range states and reported that some of the studied areas are deficient in prey of leopard.

The number of leopards during 2014 population estimation in forested habitats of tiger range states is reported to be around in the range of 6566-9181.

(c) Management of wildlife, including conflict situations is primarily the responsibility of respective State Governments. Proposals for handling of human wildlife conflict including human-leopard conflicts are part of the Annual Plans of Operation from the States seeking Central assistance for management of Wildlife.

As per the Annual Plans of Operation of the States, the Central Government provides partial Central assistance under the Centrally Sponsored Schemes of "Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats" to the States inter alia for providing ex-gratia relief to the victims of wild animal attack, and for construction/erection of physical barriers, habitat improvement etc. to prevent the entry of wild animals into human habitations and also for setting up of anti-depredation squads to drive away problematic animals.

In addition, the Ministry has issued "Guidelines for human-leopard conflict management" in 2011. Ministry also undertakes various stake holder workshops and consultations for the management of human wildlife conflict.

(d) and (e) As per the available records with the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB) of the Ministry, the incidents of leopard poaching are decreasing. The number of cases of recovery of body parts of leopards for the last three years and current year, as per the available records of the WCCB, based on the information received from State Forest and Police departments are as below:-

Year 2013 2014 2015 2016(up to 30.6.2016)

No. of cases 95 63 49 23

Ministry, through WCCB is taking the following steps to curb the poaching:-

(i). Collection, collation and dissemination of intelligence on illegal trafficking of wildlife and its parts as well as wildlife crime to various agencies for apprehension of criminals.

(ii). Coordination of inter-agency enforcement efforts in combating illegal wildlife crime.

(iii). Sensitization and capacity building of agencies in enforcement of the provisions of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972. WCCB trained 1254 forest & police officials in 2013-14, 798 in 2014-2015, 1009 in 2015-16 and 309 in 2016-17 (up to 30.06.2016) in investigation of wildlife crimes.

(iv). Awareness and education campaigns for various stakeholders, 2249 officials of BGFs, CISF, Coast Guard, DRI, Customs, forest police and judiciary etc. were sensitized about wildlife laws and related issues in 2013-14, 5927 in 2014-15, 2810 in 2015-16 and 396 in 2016-17 (up to 30.06.16). Apart from this 1235 PRI representation and villagers around the tiger reserves attended the awareness programmes in 2013-14, 1596 in 2014-15, 2425 in 2015-16 and 45 have so far attended in 2016-17 up to 30.06.16.

(v). Joint operations with state enforcement agencies to apprehend criminals involved in illegal wildlife crime.

(vi). Providing assistance to state enforcement agencies in investigation and prosecution of wildlife crime cases.

(vii). The WCCB has collated criminal profiles of 919 wildlife criminals involved in the wildlife crime cases. Based on these profiles the WCCB has prepared a list of accused involved in poaching and illegal trade in tiger/leopard body parts; and the same has been circulated to concerned State and Central Agencies to maintain strict vigil over their movements and activities. This list is being updated regularly.

(viii). The WCCB is issuing alerts and advisories on hunting and illegal trade of wildlife to concerned Central and State Agencies for

preventive action.

(ix). The WCCB has brought out the following publications for the capacity building of the field officers of relevant enforcement agencies"

(x). Handbook for wildlife crime investigation officers on wildlife crime investigation.

(xi). X-Ray Manual of wildlife products in illegal trade Identification Manual of Wildlife Species in trade.
